

Historical Background

On a hill overlooking the Whitemarsh Valley, General George Washington encamped his Continental Army in November of 1777. "Camp Hill" provided the general with an excellent view of British forces while his 15,000 troops held the area firm and defended against attack. From Camp Hill the Continental Army marched to its infamous winter quarters at Valley Forge. More than two centuries later, WEC International's US headquarters is located on this historic ground in Fort Washington, Pennsylvania.

As early as 1690 Camp Hill was part of Nicolas Scull's, "Springfield Manor." His son, Nicolas Jr., was an invaluable cartographer and the Surveyor-General of Pennsylvania from 1748 until his death in 1761. Nicolas Jr. was a member of Ben Franklin's Junto Club, which birthed the first successful lending library in America. He also negotiated treaties with the Indians and was directly involved in "the great Indian walk" of 1737. Nicolas Jr. and his wife, Abigail, are buried at Camp Hill in the Scull family cemetery.

In 1882 John and Sarah (Drexel) Fell, a wealthy couple from Philadelphia, chose Camp Hill as the site of their country home. Sarah was the daughter of Anthony J. Drexel, American financier, banker, founder of J.P. Morgan & Co. (then named Drexel, Morgan & Co) and founder of Drexel University. The Fells built a mansion on top of the hill, which became known as the "Buckingham Palace of Philadelphia." They left most of the 70 surrounding acres as woodland. The Fells' building project attracted quite a bit of attention, drawing crowds of people to the site on foot or by buggy to watch the progress. Locals were fascinated by the estate's personal electric plant which provided power for the house and woods to be lit up at night, the likes of which they had never seen before.

Over sixteen years the Fells had six children. In 1895, John died of a stroke, at the age of 37. In 1898 Sarah remarried. The wedding of Sarah and Alexander Van Rensselaer took place at Camp Hill Hall. The couple enlarged the main house to include 43 rooms and 13 fireplaces. Ten fireplaces remain today. The Van Rensselaers also added a swimming pool, stone bathhouses, a surrounding pillared trellis, stone benches, and many gardens, including a sunken garden in the woods that was accessed by a stone stairway. The Van Rensselaers were world travelers, visiting places such as Japan, China, India, the Suez Canal, Italy, and France. During their travels they were entertained by the Rajah of Singapore, the royal family of Japan and the Viceroy of India, and were honored by being presented at the court of King James in 1911. The Van Rensselaers were known for hosting the likes of J.P.

Morgan and inviting Philadelphia's high society to their many balls.

returned in later years and tell of hiding in the draperies to watch

The children of servants who worked at Camp Hill Hall have

the ladies' ball gowns twirl past them. But the couple was also known 'for their hospitality and Christian work in helping both the old and young.' They enjoyed sharing their home and treated all guests equally, regardless of economic or social standing. At Christmastime each year, they held parties for dozens of local children, giving a present to each child. During summer months they hosted underprivileged children, in groups of ten, for ten-day visits at nearby Little Orchard Farm on the greater Camp Hill estate. Their generosity also extended well beyond their home. When the US went to war with Spain in 1898, the Van Rensselaers turned their elegant yacht over to the Navy to be used as a hospital and supply ship in Puerto Rican waters. During the 1918 coal shortage, Sarah and her married daughter, Mae, shared their coal with those in need.

Sarah Van Rensselaer died of influenza at Camp Hill Hall on February 4, 1929. Alexander died on July 19, 1933. As there were no children from their marriage, the Van Rensselaer name has all but disappeared from this area.

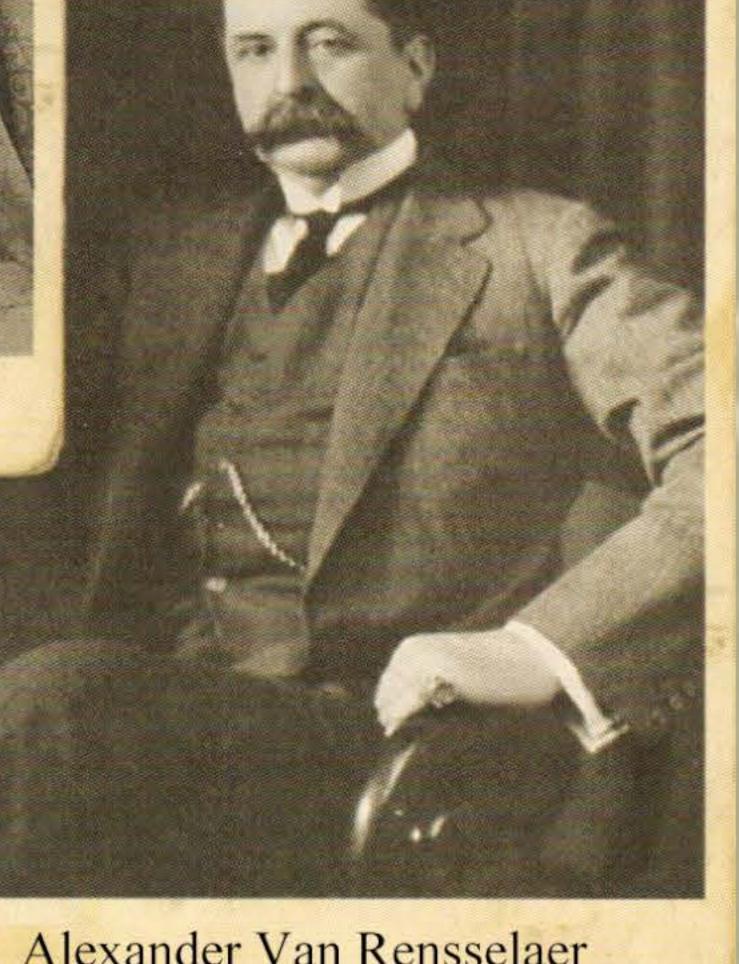
The Miracles

Camp Hill Hall was uninhabited for 12 years after Alexander's death. It was then purchased by a Mrs. Deichleman, who turned the property into a military academy. The venture failed and the property was again vacant for three years. During this time, vandals, vagrants, and thieves nearly destroyed the property.



John R. and Sarah (Drexel) Fell

a hangout for hobos. Although she originally priced the



Alexander Van Rensselaer

In December 1951 when WEC first inquired about the property, North American sending base leader Alfred Ruscoe said Camp Hill Hall looked "like a bombed-out building ... with all the windows knocked out [only 8

> of 120 remained intact] and all the paint peeled off doors and walls." With missing windows and leaks in the roof, snow had piled high in the dining room while icicles hung from the ceiling. Mrs. Deichleman was eager to sell the property as it had become

property at \$150,000, she reduced the prices to \$60,000 when she learned about WEC's missionary work. Many WECers were unsure about buying such a rundown property, but after a time of prayer, God gave them peace and agreement on the matter and provided funding to repair the property. It became the headquarters and sending base for WEC USA.

With Hard Work

As repairs were being made, a few brave souls stayed in Camp Hill Hall at night to show that it was occupied. One night ten homeless men arrived expecting accommodations but were politely informed that the "Hobo Hotel" was now closed.

Since WEC obtained the property many renovations have been made, and two buildings have been added. Some of the property has been sold to fund these projects. Approximately 20 acres make up the WEC USA property today.

Camp Hill in the 21 Century

The sending base is essential to the success of WEC's work around the world. WEC is an international mission with over 1,800 workers from 60 countries serving in multicultural teams among 83 countries and nearly 101 peoples groups, focusing on unreached people groups Between 2002 and 2018 WEC has planted 389 churches around the world.

The major purposes of the WEC USA headquarters are channeling new missionaries overseas and providing services to assist them while there. Applicants come to the headquarters for an intensive three-month orientation course led by our Candidate Department. Students are encouraged to develop a strong relationship with the Camp Hill community, who will stand behind them as they go overseas. There is continual emphasis on total dependence on God, the importance of prayer, and working together in unity.

The Finance and Business Offices assist workers with visa applications, tax filing, travel arrangements, legal transactions and forwarding of funds overseas. The Mobilization Department identifies, challenges and recruits students and others for missionary service. Member Care services are provided for those workers needing counselling.

The Short Term Department organizes short-term mission experiences for individuals and for groups. We have three different programs.

- 1.- Discovery allows you to explore the world of missions joining one of the existing WEC teams or a church team. The length of this program goes from one to three months for individuals and from two to four weeks for groups.
- 2.- WEC Trek is aimed at tailoring your trip to your preferred location, timing and ministry interest. The length of this program goes from three to twelve months.
- 3.- WEC Core offers a variety of places around the world published in our website. The length of this program goes from one to three years.

The Facilities Director leads the Maintenance, Household, Kitchen and Accommodations teams that care for our buildings and grounds, our WEC family, candidates, and our many guests and volunteers each year.

The IT Department maintains communication systems, enabling contact between the sending base and our workers around the world. The Media Department creates websites, brochures, advertising, and maintains the WEC USA Social Media.

Always Going Forward

Camp Hill is a site rich with history. More than two hundred years after General Washington was here, Camp Hill is a place of many activities. Camp Hill is home to a family of volunteers who give their lives and resources to share the good news of life in Jesus Christ, and the peace and freedom that only He can bring, around the world as well as here at the sending base.





WEC International Reaching People | Planting Churches | Mobilizing for Missions



To see Christ known, loved and worshiped by the unreached peoples of the world

Mission

Empowered by the Holy Spirit, with a sense of urgency and a commitment to work with others, we:

- 1. Proclaim the gospel by word and deed, so that people come to a living faith in Jesus Christ as Savior and Lord and become his disciples.
- 2. Gather believers around Christ, establishing churches in the Word of God so that they make disciples in their communities and beyond.
- 3. Mobilize for missions, recruit, train, send and care for workers in fellowship with the wider Church.

Core Principles

Faith

God is worthy of our absolute trust. We are totally dependent on him as the supplier of every need in our lives and ministries. We trust him to fulfill his revealed purposes despite opposition, difficulty and apparent impossibility.

Holiness

God is holy and has created us in his image. Our desire is to please him in every part of our lives through the power of the Holy Spirit.

Sacrifice

Loving Christ is our core passion. The cross, with its principles of denying self and of losing one's life to bless others, is a defining symbol of life as a Christ-follower.

Fellowship

We are a community of God's people drawn from various backgrounds and cultures, reflecting the diversity of the global Church. We are united through one head - our Lord Jesus Christ - and are part of one Church, those who love our Lord Jesus Christ in sincerity and truth. Our oneness in Christ makes it possible to serve together as brothers and sisters.



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"If Jesus Christ be God and died for me, then no sacrifice can be too great for me to make for Him."

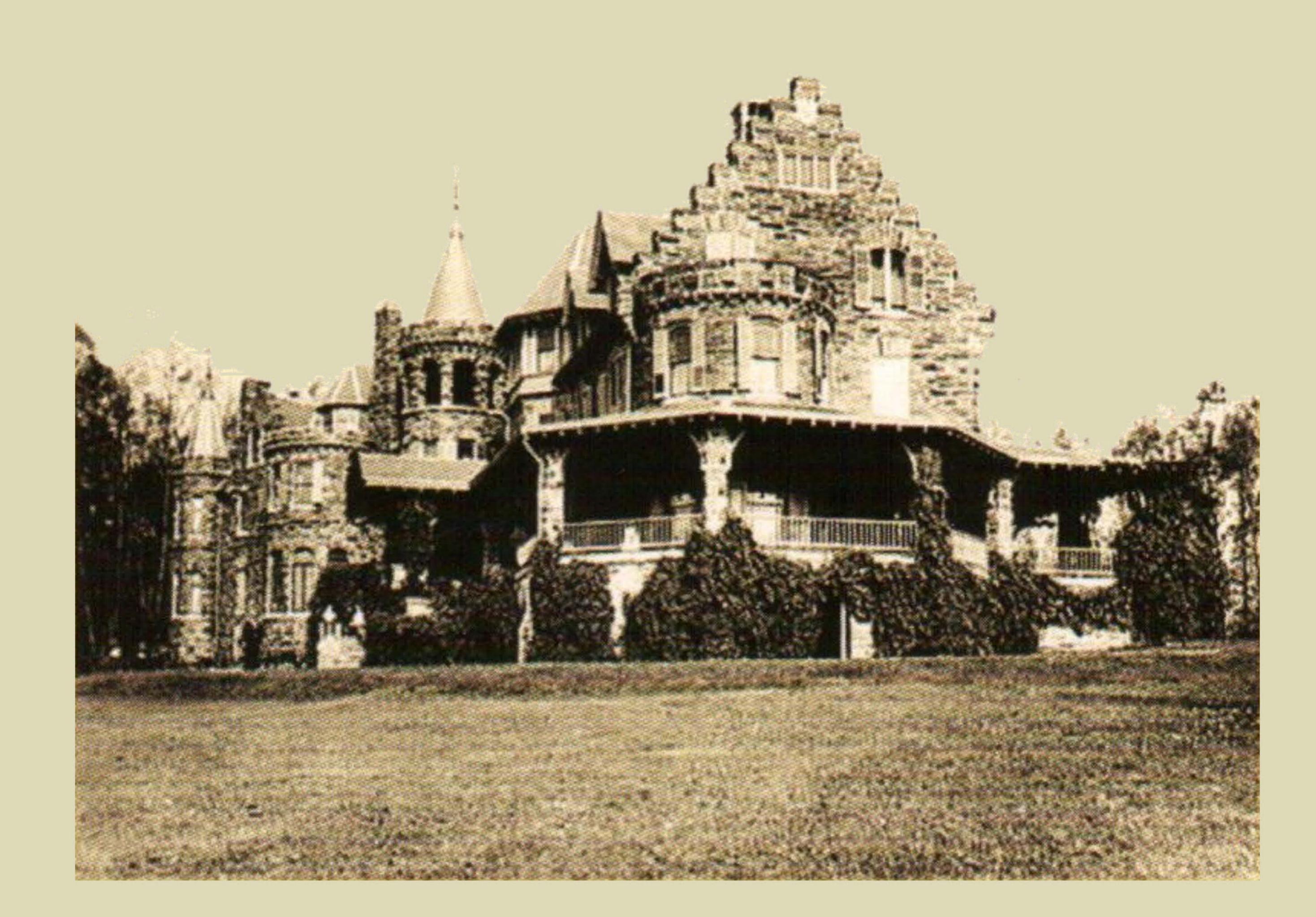
- C.T. Studd





Camp Hill Hall

History



Once called the "Buckingham Palace of Philadelphia," now the headquarters of WEC International USA

